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Leroy Garrett, Editor

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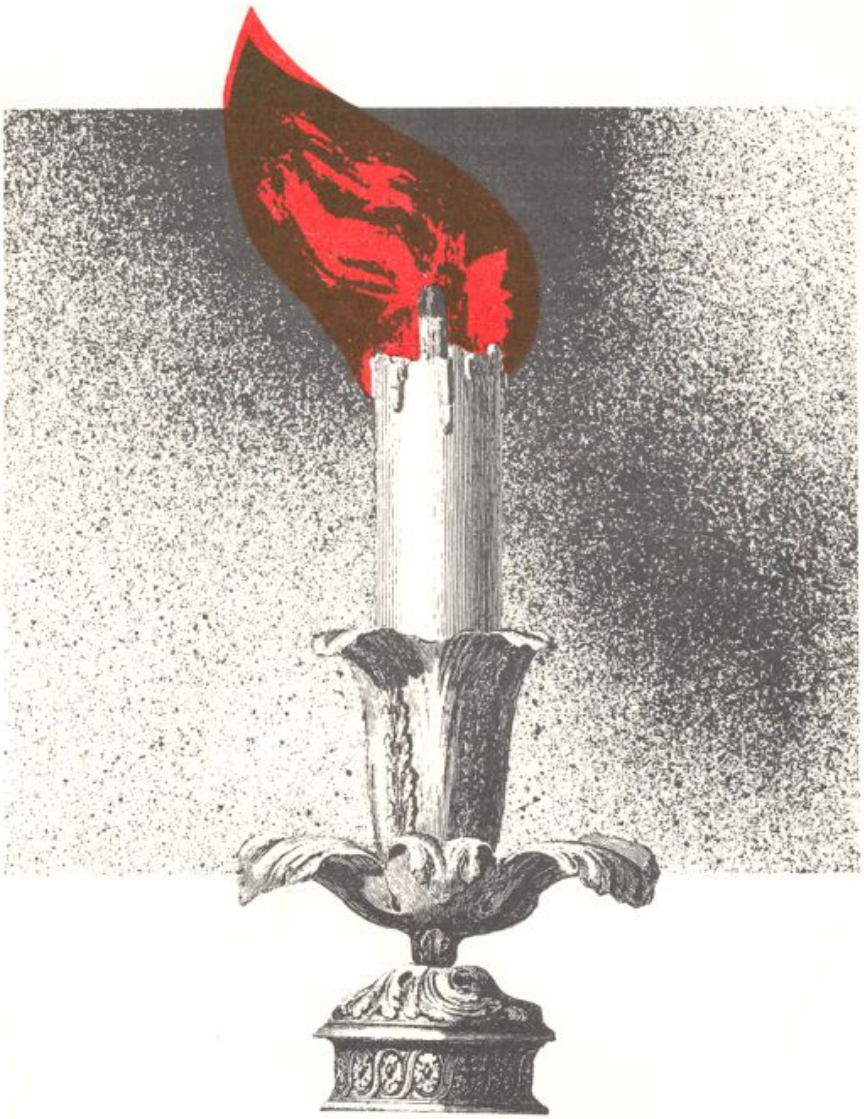

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. — *John 4:24*

Volume 15, No. 7 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **September 1973**

The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today . . .

THE CHURCH IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

There is a growing awareness among us that worship is a life of faith, devotion, and dedication, and not an experience limited to "five acts," or however many, that occur when we are "at church." We are coming to see that worship embraces the whole of the believer's life, everything he does, whether selling, plowing, cooking, or praying. Col. 3:17 gets close to this concept: "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Acts 17:27 may get even closer: "God is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being." It is amiss, therefore, to speak of "going to worship" or of a "worship service," as if worship were something that begins and ends for the child of God.

Still it is appropriate to speak of the corporate worship of the saints, referring to that experience of believers sharing together in assembly in the presence of Christ through his Spirit. Fishing can be, and for the disciple should be, a worshipful experience, with full awareness of the Spirit's presence; but this is different from sharing in the Body of Christ in assembly. This is the Body at worship, with each member present, participating in all that is implied by such an assembly.

Just what difference the assembly makes is part of the burden of this essay. Christianity, except for Judaism, is the only world religion that calls for an assembly of worship for its adherents. We *could* have a religion so individualistic that each of us would "do his own thing" with the Father, making any kind of group meeting superfluous. God did not so decree. To the contrary, the saints in corporate worship is a vital aspect of the Christian faith. Why is this? To answer this is to lay groundwork for the understanding of Christian worship.

The assembly is not a matter of arbitrary command on God's part, nor is it a matter of the saints fulfilling certain things that are required of them. There are rather three underlying principles involved: (1) the presence of Christ with his Body in a special way, different from his presence with us as individuals; (2) agape love is expressed, or should be, in a way not possible without the assembly; (3) the building up of

the church *(oikodome)*, which occurs in meetings where the saints mutually share, encouraging and strengthening one another.

Jesus is, of course, present with anyone of us, at any time and any place, and yet Matt. 18:20 says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" —*in some special way* he seems to be saying. He is teaching the apostles about their authority to bind and loose sins, which none of us has, and so he says, "If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven." But this seems to be drawn from the broader principle that follows, "For where two or three are gathered in my name" —whether apostles or not — "there am I in the midst of them" —in a very real and special way. When believers assemble for Jesus' sake, a corporate aspect is present into which the Spirit of Christ moves, blessing the occasion with his presence.

This is especially evident in the Lord's Supper, which is clearly central in corporate worship, for it is here that the risen Christ unites with his Body. 1 Cor. 10:16 describes the Supper as a participation *(koinonia)* in the body and blood of Christ. Jesus had said in introducing the supper, "I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This seems to have found partial fulfillment in the church's gathering for the Supper. Paul may be speaking of this mystery of Christ's presence in his Body at the Supper when he says, "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf" (1 Cor. 10:18). Is he not saying that we are one together *in him*, which is why we break one loaf *with him?* And so in 1 Cor. 11:29 the apostle warns against taking the Supper without discerning the Body," that is, without realizing what the Supper is all about, that it is Jesus present with his one, united church (exemplified in the one loaf), and not a factious, divided Body, which was the inclination at Corinth.

The precious truth of Jesus' presence in corporate worship as head of his Body, the church, should transform our concept of the assembly. If each of us could say meaningfully to himself as he meets with other disciples, "He is here. Through his Spirit Jesus is present as his Body gathers," what a deliverance this would be from any arbitrary, legalistic view of fulfilling an obligation of going to church.

And this principle of Jesus' presence relates to the principle of agape love in that it is in the assembly, in Jesus' presence, that we show our love to one another as members of the Body. We are a family in love with each other, and we meet together because we love each other and want to be with the Father together. This is why the Lord's Supper was at first part of a love feast. Here the wealthy shared with the poor, many of whom were slaves, and it was in the assembly that the needs of all were taken care of. Justin's description of worship in the early church, which we shall be making several references to, speaks of "the gifts that have been brought" for the needy. Charity was a substantial concern in the early church, finding glorious expression in the assembly of the saints. This explains Paul's concern in 1 Cor. 11:21, written to a church that was allowing the factious spirit to destroy agape love: "For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk.

The principle of *oikodome,* building up the body, is basic to corporate worship because it was precisely for this purpose that the saints assembled. Even agape love, the love feast, and the Supper were all intended to edify the Body. This is the theme of 1 Cor. 14, an important source for information on early worship. Paul says prophecy is a more desirable gift because "he who prophesies speaks to men for their up-building and encouragement and consolation" (verse 3). Prophecy is more vital than tongues, for "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church" (verse 4), and in the same verse he gives the desired purpose for all that transpires in the assembly —*so that the church may be edified.* Verse19 shows the purpose to be "in order to instruct others," and in verse 26 the grand design of the assembly is made clear: "Let all things be done for edification."

In verse 6 Paul, in discussing whether he should speak in tongues, asked: “How shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? That question, *How shall I benefit you?*, is a key to understanding the nature of the assembly. It was for mutual benefit. It was the one area of acceptable competition between believers, for in verse 12 Paul says, “Strive to excel in building up the church.”

The early church thus assembled because it was in corporate worship that Jesus met with them, it was a fellowship of agape love, and it was for the building up of the Body that they might “grow up in every way into him who is the head.” All that they did, therefore, was to these ends. They were not an “audience” gathered to be ministered to. They were all ministers themselves, edifying and comforting one another, and there were neither pulpits nor sermons. There was some order and control, to be sure, but there was more spontaneity than prescription.

The church was a long time without either temple or property, perhaps more than two centuries. The simple and informal character of their places of meeting reflect the unpretentiousness of their worship. The historian Mosheim observes that “The places of assembling were, undoubtedly the private houses of Christians,” which conforms to the several references in scripture to “the church in thy house.” The intervening centuries have given us such concern for real estate holdings as to invite problems that they never dreamed of, and the modern church edifice makes meaningful Christian worship more difficult to achieve. We often have but few close friends in our large churches, and we may not even be acquainted with the family sitting next to us in the breaking of bread. A return to the atmosphere of family worship would simplify such problems as the place of women in worship, membership rolls, open membership, cooperation, budgets and treasuries, instrumental music. While our real estate has given us a lot of hangups, it does not follow that small churches, with or without buildings, are the answer to all our problems.

As we look more particularly at early corporate worship, we must ask ourselves if the point of our inquiry is to emulate what we find in as much detail as possible, or are we in search of norms, illustrations, and applications that will enable us to respond to our time as they did to theirs? Are our churches in Tennessee to worship as those did in Judea? In all the exact details? Are our congregations in California to follow the corporate worship of the Gentile churches of Asia? And did not the Jewish and Gentile churches differ in their worship? Really, were any two New Testament churches precisely alike? So, if we are to follow them as one would a blueprint, then which one?

An answer to this begins with a rundown of the component parts of primitive worship. Surprising as it may be, many of the things they did are seldom present in modern worship, while we emphasize things that were absent in their assemblies. The following list is hardly complete: public reading of scripture, the saying of *Amen!,* the confession of sins, various benedictions, praise and thanksgiving, spontaneous prayer (including the common *Maranatha,* Come, Lord Jesus!), the Lord's Supper (often in conjunction with love feast), hymns and psalms (probably individually rendered rather than congregational), teaching (which was distinguished from *preaching,* which was not part of the worship), almsgiving (out of spontaneous needs and almost certainly not out of a common treasury), exhortation, tongues and their interpretation, prophesy, the holy kiss.

If some of us moderns who suppose we have "restored the primitive church," were to enter TV's time tunnel and suddenly found ourselves transposed to an assembly of the early church, we would surely be shocked over the difference between our "primitive" worship and their primitive worship. Their unrestrained love for each other, their closeness to the Holy Spirit, their spontaneity and joy, their separation from the world, their acts of mercy, and their common bond as antagonists to a persecuting government would cause us some discomfort, and we would probably be unprepared for the enthusiastic praise, prayer and thanksgiving without anyone ever being called on for anything!

This is not to say that we are to duplicate precisely what they did, if indeed this can be definitely ascertained, but folk who lay claim to being the restored first century church need to realize what they are claiming, and to face up to the fact that probably no modern church even begins to approximate primitive worship. The cultural and anthropological problems being what they are, there is a question as to whether such would even be possible.

Their assemblies were often daily (Acts 2:42), while the "fixed day" of Pliny's letter the emperor Trajan is "the day of the Sun" of Justin Martyr and "the Lord's day" of Rev. 1:10. Pliny tells us that the believers met before sunrise "to sing antiphonally a song to Christ as to a god." This may refer to chanting to one another. All our early sources whether Pliny or Justin, or the Didache or the New Testament, make it clear that the Supper was central in these assemblies. Pliny says, "They shared a common meal together," while Justin refers to the "bread and wine mixed with water" that was taken. Some sources mention honey as part of the mixture. But there is no known reference to

cornbread being placed on the Lord's table! Those who find the likes of coke and cornbread such notorious deviations for the Supper, illustrations long in vogue in our ranks, just might also be uneasy with the addition of water and honey. The water was added almost certainly for the sake of economy, and the honey to make the drink more palpable. Obviously such disciples did not look to the first Supper as legalistically as do some moderns. Cornbread or not, it is interesting that we moderns have been content with Welch's grape juice in the face of the obvious fact that the early church used wine — sometimes mixed with water and honey! As for the bread, we are sticklers for the Jewish matzo, as if this is what Jesus *chose.* Jesus simply *took* bread, whatever was available. We presume it was unleavened since it was Passover week. A suitable counterpart in our day, I presume, would be a slice of Mrs. Baird's. To be sure, no kind of bread is *prescribed* in scripture.

In any event the Supper was at first in connection with the Passover, between Jesus and the Twelve, and it continued for sometime to be part of a proper meal, called a love feast (Jude 12). Gradually the Supper became a memorial within itself, quite apart from any meal, as it is today, but always an expression of agape love.

Since Justin Martyr's account of early worship is important, being the most definitive statement we have in or out of the scriptures, it is presented here. It was written about 150 A.D.

> On the day called after the sun a meeting of all who live in cities or in the country takes place at a common spot and the Memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time allows. When the reader is finished the leader delivers an address through which he exhorts and requires men to follow noble teachings and examples. Then we all rise and send heavenwards prayers. And, as said before, as soon as we are finished praying, bread and wine mixed with water are laid down and the leader too prays and gives thanks, as powerfully as he can, and the people join in, in saying the "Amen"; and now comes the distribution to each and the common meal on the gifts that have been brought and to those who are not present it is sent by the hands of the deacons.

The reading of the scriptures emphasized in Justin is adequately reinforced in scripture. Paul wanted his letters read in the assembly (Col. 4:16), and he urged Timothy to "attend to the public reading of scripture" (1 Tim. 4:13). Rev. 1:3 also says, "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy and blessed are those who hear." *Rev-*

elation is, by the way, an important source on early worship, scholars believing that it preserves many doxologies, prayers, and songs of the early church (Rev. 5:9 is, for example, an old song). There is far more said about reading the scriptures than preaching sermons (none!), which is a severe contradiction to the modern church, which has become pulpit-centered and sermon-oriented.

The Justin passage is also reminiscent of the synagogue, which provides us insight into early Christian worship, the synagogue more than the temple. The synagogue emphasized the educational over the ritualistic, and it allowed for more openness and spontaneity. It is fairly well established that many synagogues became Messianic, which called for little change in terms of corporate worship except for the Supper itself.

1 Cor. 14:26 has traces of synagogal worship: “When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” Like the synagogue, the assembly was a place of learning, the school of Christ where disciples mutually taught one another.

What are we to make of all this, which of course is only part of the story? Certainly it is important to understand what they did, even when we see a diverse picture emerging. It is equally important to learn *why* they did what they did. We are nowhere given an exact description of corporate worship in the scriptures, nor is there any implication that we are to ferret out some pattern and make it our rule of procedure. The Bible simply does not tell us to worship like the Ephesians or the Corinthians, and if it did we would be at a loss to know just what they did.

Did they have weekly collections and a common treasury, the source of so much agitation among our people today? The only passage that even remotely suggests such is 1 Cor. 16:2, and one only needs to study the context to see that this was a temporary provision, and even then it was a call for money to be laid aside at home so that the believers would have the wherewithal when Paul came by. Even so, it may well be appropriate that we gather our funds in some such way as we do, though for our time a monthly contribution by mail would be an improvement. But we must outgrow this notion that in passing a plate on Sunday we are following some scriptural pattern.

The same for congregational singing. Our brothers have been fractured over the question of the organ all these years when it cannot even be established that the early church had congregational singing, with or without the instrument! There is an indication of solos in 1 Cor. 14:26 - “Each one has a hymn” —and if we follow that order we should be able to allow each one who sings to us to decide for himself how he’ll go about it.

But out of it all emerges a norm for corporate worship. The basic ingredients are clear enough, with the Supper as central. The principles of the presence of Jesus, agape love, and edification are gloriously clear. Already we know more than we are doing. The worship experiences of the early church encourages us to honor Jesus as they honored him, drawing upon whatever resources that are available to us to make that worship the most meaningful. Such norms as emerge — sincerity, mutuality, simplicity, sharing of the common life (fellowship), liberality, charity, agape — give us our discipline, and these coupled with the basic ingredients of the Supper and instruction give us our direction.

So our judgments need not be many. A church that does not share in the joy of the Lord’s Supper or teach its people the scriptures justly deserves our remonstrance, for these are basic to Christian worship. But they may do these things in ways that vary greatly, and this should be without remonstrance from those of us who see diversity in scripture. There is always need for more praise and prayer, more exhortation, benedictions, confession of sins, and the Amen, all of which have scriptural support.

Others are going to come up with the holy kiss, tongues, and foot washing - and congregational singing and budgets and collections! Here we need not offer remonstrance, and there is no need to argue about what is an act of worship. Let the principle of love rule. If some of our brothers find it meaningful to do these things that appear to most of us as peripheral at best, though with some scriptural warrant, then we need not remonstrate.

The norms *do*, of course, speak to us. I cannot, for instance, endorse any system, such as *the minister* system, that violates the principle of mutual sharing and the priesthood of all believers. There can, of course, be great variety in methods used, but a clergy system that prohibits the free exercise of every member of the Body, so basic to scripture, has to be opposed, with love and forbearance to be sure, but nonetheless opposed. Any system that denies any believer complete access to the “altar” is in violation of the Spirit of all that we have learned in this essay. —*the Editor*

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THE CHURCH TREASURY AND FELLOWSHIP

For upwards of two decades a new division has been emerging in our ranks, and the lines are now so tightly drawn that there is virtually no contact between the newly formed segment and the mainline from which it came. The churches number several hundreds, representing perhaps 5% of the non-instrument Churches of Christ, most of them being among the smaller congregations. But some of our more influential leaders and churches have long been associated with this dissident group, variously called “Anti’s” or “Non-cooperatives” or “Conservatives.” They have churches in most cities where the Church of Christ is strong, and in recent years they have been increasingly involved in work abroad. But all this as separatists from other Churches of Christ. My own city of Denton, Texas is illustrative, for here the little non-cooperative group enjoys no fellowship with the five other Churches of Christ, and there is probably as much antagonism shown toward them as they manifest towards others. When ministers visit each other’s congregations, which is rare indeed, they are no more recognized than if they were visiting priests from a Buddhist temple.

The controversy, which has been bitter and acrimonious through the years, has to do with the nature of congregational cooperation, as to whether many churches (or *one* church for that matter) can do their work through the auspices of another, sometimes dubbed “sponsoring church.” The validity of the work is not necessarily questioned, but the methodology is believed to be unscriptural unless each church is doing its own work directly. This is, of course, an old controversy in the Restoration Movement, perhaps the most argued of any question to arise among us.

The occasion this time around was the beginning of the Herald of Truth radio (and now - TV) program, with hundreds of congregations paying the freight and the Highland church in Abilene serving as the clearing house, which through the years has grown into a kind of church bureaucracy that could be opposed on pragmatic grounds if not scriptural. But the controversy now involves far more than Herald of Truth, concerned as it is with all aspects of the church’s life, whether support of orphanages and colleges or such extra-curricular activities as fellowship halls, skating parties, and youth organizations. The new segment sees this as “liberalism,” and so we have “liberal churches” and “liberal preachers,” and the “conservatives” insist that these digressions are reflective of a loose attitude toward the Bible. And so they might explain the whole problem as a difference in attitude toward the authority of the scriptures, which is of course what the reactionary group always says of

the innovators. The reason the Christian Church has instrumental music and we don't is because we respect the authority of the scriptures and they don't!

With the lines drawn, the battle joined, and the debates raging the new group, like all preservers of orthodoxy, has been beset by the struggle to be consistent, which tends to drive men to extremes. As a consequent they have in recent years had difficulty holding their bright young preachers, who do not always leave, but as often than not they stay within the ranks in order to set forth a more moderate view both toward "the issues" and toward their brethren who differ with them. This has become so urgent that one journal among them is presently publishing an extended series on "The New Unity Cult," which is ostensibly an attack on Carl Ketcherside, who has influenced some of these men to a more irenic stance, but in reality it inveighs against these "neophytes" who dare to question the party issues. The said journal has also attacked the party's old faithful, the *Gospel Guardian*, for sending forth an uncertain sound. So, an intra-fratricidal skirmish is on, which, according to our history to date, sets the stage for still another division ere long, all in the name of preserving the faith.

I can say unequivocally that I love these brethren and am grieved that they are such problems to themselves and to the church at large. And they *are* my blood brothers in the Lord; not cousins or in-laws but brothers. And I have lately had occasion to give their position closer study than I have before, especially with a view of discovering its underlying theses. The criticism that follows is not only given with love, but with a view of helping these brethren to analyze their thinking with more objectivity.

I must say at the outset that I see two fatal fallacies in their position, which probably stem from a desire for a consistency that men hardly ever achieve. Emerson has advised us wisely: "With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall." The first fallacy has to do with the church treasury, which assumes that the primitive ecclesia had a common fund out of which its financial

responsibilities were fulfilled, which in turn identifies what is "the work of the church" over against what an individual Christian may do.

The notion of a church treasury underlies the whole structure of the non-cooperative position. When Herald of Truth began, these brethren did not oppose the basic concept of preaching the gospel over the radio, for they themselves were doing this on various stations across the land. Nor did they object to it being supported. If the Abilene church had made it its own project without involving other churches, there would have been no problem. Nor would there have been objection if *individuals* by the hundreds or thousands had sent money to Abilene for such a purpose. The objection centered in churches taking money from the treasury and doing the Lord's work through another church. Abilene itself could take from its own treasury and support the work, but they could not become a sponsoring agency for other congregations who would draw from their common funds for the work. This is based upon the idea that the scriptures provide a pattern for all this, and that there simply is no authority for Abilene to do as it is doing.

This "out of the church treasury" syndrome reached such velocity in the press and in debates that one editor-debater among the dissenters suggested what he thought might be a workable compromise. Let those churches inclined to support Herald of Truth place a box in the vestibule for the offerings of all those who choose to give to it. The dollars that a brother would put into the collection basket would, of course, become part of the church treasury, which could be used only for the Lord's work assumed by that congregation, and could not therefore go to any sponsoring church such as at Abilene. The dollars the same brother would drop into the box in the vestibule a few minutes later would not be "church treasury" money and could therefore be spent anyway the individual donor sees fit.

It is childish to argue that money placed in a collection basket on Sunday suddenly by hocus-pocus becomes "the Lord's money," while that which remains in one's pocket is his to do with what he pleases. But this is the thinking that lies at the heart of the "church treasury fallacy," which assumes an important difference between the dollars a

brother drops into a basket one moment and those he drops into a box the next moment. Such a distinction cannot be drawn, first of all, for the simple reason that there is no such notion in scripture of a primitive *ecclesia* having a common fund or treasury.

The second fallacy is related to the first, which is the distinction drawn between what a congregation can do over against what an individual may do, a difference that these brethren make with an attempt for rigid consistency. They suppose they can identify "the work of the church" by a particular array of scriptures, and then there is "the work of the individual" which other scriptures point to. Anyone who talks with these brethren will soon find himself lost in this circle. When they ask for scriptural authority for a certain church's program, you might counter with a particular verse. ''But that is the work of the individual," they will say. But if you ask them about the way they spend their money, whether for real estate or a preacher's automobile, they will assure you that such things are "the work of the church" and therefore are justifiable expenditures from the treasury.

May I kindly suggest that these brethren may well be making a distinction that does not exist in scripture? Let us approach the Bible inductively rather than deductively, allowing ourselves to reach no conclusion but what is fully supported by evidence, rejecting all temptation to *make* it conform to our preconceived notions. If one does this, there is no way to come up with a neat package labeled "the work of the church" and another tagged "the word of the individual." One can guess, surmise, infer, or conjecture, but he is not likely to *prove* any such distinction.

Since "the church" is made up of individuals it is difficult to draw a line between what a congregation does as the corporate Body of Christ in assembly and what the members do as disciples of Jesus, and any possible difference may not be all that important anyway. For instance we learn in Acts 11 that because of a famine in Judea "the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul." This may or may not be a *congregational* act. It simply informs us that "the disciples" sent relief.

If one limits himself to those things that seem reasonably certain to be the action of a congregation as distinguished from the individual, the list would be something like the following. And by "the church" I mean corporate action on the part of a congregation in assembly, either with elders or an evangelist having the oversight.

1. In the discipline of its members, such as the fornicator in 1 Cor. 5, for here Paul says: "When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of the Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan" (1 Cor. 5:4). This is clearly *congregational* action, but this does not fall within the category of what we usually label "the *work* of the church."

2. The corporate worship of the church. Please read my essay on this subject in this issue. Disciples worshipped as a Body to break bread and encourage one another, but again this is not usually thought of as the *work* of the church.

3. The instances where messengers or servants were selected by the church for special missions. In Acts 6 the apostles "summoned the body of the disciples" and had them select seven men to be servants. In 1 Cor. 16 Paul instructs the church to "accredit by letter" those to be sent to Jerusalem. 2 Cor. 8:19 indicates that Timothy was "appointed by the churches" to travel with Paul, which sounds like corporate approval on the part of several congregations. There are other references to messengers of the churches, indicating congregational action.

That is about as far as we can go and still be sure. We do have the "enrolling" of widows in 1 Tim. 5, which refers to their being cared for. Their own loved ones are to take the responsibility, when possible, and "let the church not be burdened." Which may mean no more than that there were some widows, who had no relatives to care for them, who were taken into the homes of the saints. I cannot here *prove* congregational benevolence as distinguished from individual.

We have no indication that the responsibility of preaching the gospel was given to *the church*, but rather to individual believers. The commission in Matt. 28 is to the apostles, while the charge to "Preach the word" in 2 Tim. 4:2 is to an evangelist. The assignment "And let

him who hears say 'Come'" in Rev. 22:17 is to all saints. The Thessalonians "sounded forth the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1:8), which is a clear reference to individual endeavor. This idea that believers are relieved of their *personal* responsibility by teaching and serving by proxy through a church treasury, from which others are paid to do what is the duty of all, is not in the scriptures. The important question is not what "we" are doing as a congregation (hardly a biblical concept), but what "I" am doing as an individual.

One can always conjecture about these things, such as that the Philippian's support of Paul was "the work of the church" and out of a common fund as against spontaneous individual support (Phil. 4:15-18), but conjecture is poor grounds upon which to draw the line of fellowship. Our old pioneers gave us a principle that will work: "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love. Those who wish to make a big deal out of this "work of the church-church treasury" thing have all the right to do so if they only keep it a matter of opinion. Only those things that are "clearly set forth in the scriptures," to quote Thomas Campbell, can be made a matter of faith.

That the Spirit is speaking to individuals in the scriptures in reference to moral and spiritual responsibilities is evident enough from the fact that we are not to be judged as congregations. It is a tragic fallacy for an individual to suppose that he fulfills his responsibility for saving the lost or succoring the needy by putting money into a church treasury, however nobly the money is spent. What a congregation does as a corporate group through a treasury is that church's own arrangement, and not one based on scripture. This by no means suggests that it is wrong. It only means that it is our way of doing things, like owning property, and not something based on scriptural precedent. It could well be argued that there is nothing in "the spirit of scripture" that disallows such, and so we choose it as an expeditious way of serving God. But let's not argue that we have commands or examples for such when we don't. Nor should we leave the more damaging impression that an individual disposes of his personal obligation by giving into a treasury, which in turn pays others to do what all should be doing.

This simply means that a congregation need have no treasury at all just as it need own no building. It could meet in homes (like the primitive saints!), and be busy with all sorts of good works by each individual doing what God teaches him to do. Each would give his money in whatever way he felt would glorify God, whether Monday night or Saturday morning. One might help support an evangelist in Africa or several might agree to do such together. In other words they would be busy being disciples in word and in deed. What would they do as a corporate Body? Meet in worship and encourage one another to good

works. What work would they do as a congregation? Nothing. God doesn't tell them to do anything as an assembly except to meet, break bread and teach each other. None need ever give a dime into a treasury.

Such a group of saints might not support an ecclesiastical system that way, nor a pastor with his manse. They might not get involved in huge real estate projects, moving from one church plant to a larger one every few years. Nor would they likely gain much of a reputation within some denominational structure. But I dare say that they would be closer to the ecclesia of the New Covenant scriptures than would be their critics, and they might well be a greater blessing to the world by way of their vis-a-vis benevolence to suffering humanity. But any discussion with our conservative brethren will bring you to a cluster of scriptures centered in 1 Cor. 16:2, which concerns the aid sent to the saints in Judea, for it is here evident, they insist, that churches in Macedonia, Galatia, and Corinth sent money out of their own treasuries to the poor, with no one church serving as a clearing house for the others.

I realize that if we take from these brethren their cherished notion of a treasury and show that this too is simply instances of individuals responding to a need, that we reduce their *raison d'etre* to zero. If indeed Paul is telling these churches (and he told Galatia what he told Corinth, verse 1) that each of them is to put something aside in his dresser drawer at home in order to have something saved for the poor saints in Judea, then out the window goes the church treasury and anyone knows that is no place for a church treasury!

It is important to notice that the apostle does *not* say that each of them on the first day of the week is to contribute to a common fund, such as we do in our churches today. It cannot be *proved* that any primitive church ever collected a dime into a treasury on Sunday or any other day. Paul does not even say that they were to lay by in store on that day, but rather "let every one of you lay *by him* in store, as God hath prospered him." What does the *by him (par eauto* in Greek) mean? Paul would not have added that word if he meant that the church was to assemble and contribute to a common fund each week. Each one was to lay *by him.* We must turn to linguistic authorities to learn its meaning.

The *Analytical Greek Lexicon* cites 1 Cor. 16:2 under *eauto* and says it means "with one's self, at home," and it refers one to a similar use of the word in John 20:10: "Then the disciples went back to their homes." It is *eauto* that here stands for homes.

Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon* also cites 1 Cor. 16:2 under *eauto* and says it means "by him, at his home," and refers to the same use of the word in Lk. 24:12 where Peter "went home" after going to the empty tomb.

The *Lexicon* by Liddell and Scott cites a passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* where *eauto* is used to mean "at his own home."

The *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* says that the word means "at his own home."

This makes it clear why so many modern versions try to capture the Greek meaning by showing that Paul is telling each disciple to have his own treasury at home, or by itself, so that he will not have to raise the money a year or so hence when it will be called for. Such as:

Confraternity Version (Roman Catholic): "Let each of you put aside at home and lay up whatsoever he has a mind to."

Revised Standard: "Each of you is to put something aside and store it up."

The Emphasized Bible: "Let each of you put by itself in store."

Henry Alford's translation in his *Greek New Testament:* "Let each of you lay up at home in store whatsoever he may by prosperity have acquired."

New English Bible: "Each of you is to put aside and keep by him a sum in proportion to his gains."

Schonfield's *Authentic Version:* "The day after the Sabbath let each of you put by savings as he has prospered."

The Living Bible: "Every Sunday each of you should put aside something."

The critical scholars in their commentaries are almost unanimous in their conclusions:

Meyer's *Commentary on the New Testament:* "Let him lay up in store at home whatever he succeeds in."

Catholic Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: "With himself, by him, in his own keeping. It was not therefore to be handed in at Mass."

Lenski's *Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians:* "Each member is to keep the growing amount 'by him', in his home, and is not to deposit it with the church at once."

Marcus Dod's *First Epistle to the Corinthians:* "It is expressly said that each was to lay 'by him:, that is, not in a public fund, but at home in his own purse."

The Pulpit Commentary: "The Greek phrase implies that the laying up was to be done *at home*, but when the money was accumulated, it was doubtless brought to the assembly and handed over to the presbyters."

Lang's *Commentary on the Bible: "par eauto"* at home. The phrase is therefore conclusive against the prevailing opinion that the collection was taken up in the church. It was an individual and private affair."

Olhausen's *Biblical Commentary:* "Certainly it may not be inferred from this passage that collections took place among the congregations on the Sabbath, for it was Paul's intention that each should make a suitable contribution at home."

Abingdon Bible Commentary: "On that day each was to put aside at home something from his weekly earnings, forming a little hoard, so that there might be no hasty effort to raise funds on Paul's arrival."

One and on it goes, whether Godet, Grosheide, Scott, Moffatt, Barnes, A. T. Robertson, or Vincent. They all say, more or less as does Vincent, that *eauto* means "Put by at home."

There are a few notable exceptions among the scholars, such as McGarvey, Charles Hodge, and James McKnight. McGarvey is influenced by McKnight, who is mislead (a rare thing for him!) by the notion that if the Corinthians laid by "at home," which he acknowledges most authorities say, then Paul would still have to make the collection when he arrived, and so he is telling them to put it into a common treasury at church. McKnight should have noticed that his objection is answered in 2 Cor. 9:5, where Paul makes it clear that he was sending advance men "to arrange for this gift, so that it may be ready" when he finally arrived. There was no problem getting money together that had been hoarded at home. Anyone in a matter of moments can take his sock out of a drawer and fork over the money to someone who has been sent for it. Having the money already saved was the problem, and so Paul writes them a year in advance, giving them a plan whereby they could save it.

As for Charles Hodge, he apparently let himself be influenced by an effort to honor the Lord's day and find precedent for our current practice. This at least is the criticism that James Lange hangs on him for departing from the consensus of scholarship: "This is well argued in behalf of the solemn observance of the Lord's Day; but we can no more change the meaning of *par eauto* than we can parallel phrases in other languages. They are idiomatic expressions for 'at home' and honesty requires that we should so interpret. This is the rendering which even the ancient Syriac version gives it."

Yes, *honesty* requires that we so interpret. Now I wonder if our "church treasury" minded brethren will so interpret in the light of all this information. The scholars are to be commended for putting their scholarship before their own church practice. I appreciate the Roman Catholic scholar who laid in on the line and said, "It was not handed in at Mass," even though this is what his people practice.

Will we keep on insisting that our people put into a common fund, arguing that this is "an act of worship" for the church, glibly quoting 1 Cor. 16:2? And will our non-cooperative brethren now admit that all this rigamarole about a church treasury, as to what can and cannot be taken from it, is over something that is not even in the Bible to start

with? And what happens to all the talk about the church's work over against the individual's work now that it is clear that even in 1 Cor. 16:2 Paul is addressing himself to the individual? —*the Editor*

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8th Annual Unity Forum . . .

TULSA, HOUSTON, AND INDIANAPOLIS

The 8th Annual Unity Forum was held this year on the campus of the University of Tulsa. It was arranged and conducted by a committee of concerned believers, chaired by Larry Bradshaw, a professor at the university. It was well attended, with some sessions attracting 400 or more; and there was enthusiastic response in the sharing sessions and question periods. The speakers were from varied backgrounds of the Restoration, as was the audience, and both speakers and audience had a rather large representation of "Church of Christ charismatics."

Emphasis was given to questions regarding the Spirit, not only because this is of great concern to many in Tulsa, but because the committee realized that oneness among God's people is, after all, the fruit of the Spirit.

During the planning stage the committee was resolved to bring J. D. Bales, professor of Harding College, and the controversial Pat Boone together in the large auditorium on the campus of Oral Roberts University. I was not enthusiastic about this prospect, not for a unity forum at least, for there is a different atmosphere created in the big blowout kind of an affair and the humbler type of gatherings of a unity meeting. But the committee was gung-ho for a Bales-Boone shootout, and since I knew both men they handed me the assignment of belling the cat.

I talked by phone with Pat in Beverly Hills and found him most responsive to the notion. In fact he roared with enthusiastic laughter when I informed him that J. D. would be his respondent, going on to assure me that the professor would behave in a manner consistent with a unity effort, an assurance that I did not particularly need, realizing that brother Bales is a Christian gentleman. But Pat was most cooperative, and he was raring to go, convinced that this sort of open and frank discussion is appropriate. He spoke of schedule problems, and offered to approach Oral Roberts as a substitute if he himself could not arrange it.

Then I called J. D., realizing that he might not be able to expend all that energy due to his recent illness. But the prospect of meeting Pat at such a place as Oral Roberts University was sufficient motivation to energize an old warhorse like brother J. D. And I was pleased to note an attitude of love and respect moving in both directions, Pat toward J. D. and J. D. toward Pat.

Pat sent me his schedule for the months ahead, including the time we had set for the unity forum, and there was no way to schedule him unless we simply built the meeting around him. So we resorted to our alternate plan, which I suspect was just as well, and that was to bring Warren Lewis from West Islip, N. Y., who is known to be one of our most knowledgeable men on charismata, and to have Marvin Phillips of the Yale Blvd. congregation in Tulsa, to respond to him.

This part of the program did not seem to satisfy the charismatics, and I am not sure why. Marvin did unusually well, partly due to his irenic spirit and partly due to his more open stance on the Spirit's work. He believes in a real indwelling of the Spirit and certainly does not limit his ministry to the composition of scripture. But he does not believe the gifts of 1 Cor. 12 are applicable to the modern church, as does Warren. Warren, too, was brilliant. The disappointment may have been that the issues that most concerned people were never really joined. Too, I am persuaded that our charismatic brothers, bless their hearts, are very intent upon advancing their cause, and I do not object to this necessarily, if the crusading is not sectarian. Well, the cause was hardly advanced. I was told by several that we had selected the wrong men for the study, and one of our tongue-speakers, who was one of the dearest souls there, was so candid during a sharing session as to express his disappointment with the discussion on the Spirit.

One charismatic brother supplied us with some tongue-speaking, only a sentence or two in a sharing session along with a testimonial, but there was something about it that led some to wonder if this is really what the Holy Sprit is doing. But there was really no untoward incident at any time and a beautiful spirit prevailed throughout.

Perry Gresham of Bethany College was our keynoter, sharing with us his conviction that our great heritage as disciples has within it the healing ingredients that our people so badly need. Perry is as resourceful as he is reasonable, and he has the rare talent of coupling these to charm. I overheard one sister say to him, "You are the most charming speaker I've ever heard." The *men* were also impressed!

Carl Ketcherside spoke unto us a parable, drawn from his boyhood experience, showing that the problem of estrangement between brothers is really a problem of proper relationship with the Father. Carl

did not get along with his younger brother until he had a talk with his father, and once that relationship was in good repair and he saw his proper role in the family, he had no trouble accepting his brother, despite the differences. It was sort of a Mark Twain kind of story, with young Carl as obstreperous and cunning as Huck Finn, and it had the Mark Twain wit and humor, as well as his simple profundity. Vic Hunter, editor of *Mission*, who presided over one of the forums, is considering publishing the parable, so maybe you'll get to read it.

Waymon Miller, Stan Paregien, and Thomas Langford led us in a helpful discussion of some of our slogans, such as "No creed but Christ" and "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love." And one innovative highlight was a discussion on the ministry of women, led by women. Ruth Ash of Dallas and Gloria Bradshaw of Tulsa read papers on how they see it (seated quietly behind a table!) and even fielded questions that left no doubt but what there is much yet to be said. Cleona Harvey of Indiana was scheduled to appear also, but was unable to be present.

This particular series of yearly forums will end with ten. The ninth one will be next summer in Nashville, and in 1975 it will end where it began, at Bethany College where the first one was held in 1966.

The North American Christian Convention, which is the major gathering of the Independent Christian Churches, was held just after our Tulsa forum, July 10-1 3, and I was pleased to be among the 31,000 that attended the Indianapolis affair. Upwards of 50,000 registered in the churches, so the number who actually attended was a near record, and the evening sessions had impressive audiences of 12,000 to 16,000. The program book ran almost I 00 pages, so one can imagine the wide scope of the convention, with something for all age groups and all ministries of the church. Over 400 people were on the program in some capacity, not counting the entertainment groups, which helps to explain the large attendance. Too, the leaders seek to make it a *family* convention, which makes for bushels of kids all over the place who have their own little sub-convention going.

The convention leaders apparently have no idea but what the affair is to be a great gathering of Independent Christian Churches, but those of us who are interested in the unity of our Movement would hope that it could be used for more substantial crossing of sectarian lines than appear evident. True, the NACC has from time to time invited non-Independents, a Disciple here and a Church of Christ leader there, and even an occasional Baptist or Presbyterian; but for the most part it has all the characteristics of one more giant *denominational* gathering. And with that goes the usual trivia and superficiality that was evident enough at Indianapolis. The NACC leaders have succeeded in achieving *bigness*, which is a just tribute to a lot of hard work and careful planning, but as to how significant it is to the critical needs of Christian Churches-Churches of Christ is a question.

At one luncheon I overheard a Disciple from Bethany remark that we need an "umbrella convention" where all our disparate groups can feel at home together. My answer to that is that if we all loved each other enough and were really concerned for the prayer of Jesus for the oneness of his people, then we would find a way to make all our great meetings umbrellas, whether they be lectureships in Abilene and Nashville or annual conventions such as the NACC and the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). Those of us who are responsible for *Fellowship,* the new publication issued jointly by concerned ones from our three major groups, passed out sample copies to hundreds of convention visitors. This provided opportunity to get reactions. Some saw it as the most encouraging thing that has happened in our Movement's history, while many showed little concern. One sister from an enterprising Independent congregation would not even accept a copy once she was told that Disciples had something to do with it. "They don't even believe in the Virgin Birth," she assured me, "so I'm not interested in reading

anything they write." The fact that the president of her own convention was one of the editors did not influence her.

Next came a meeting in Houston with a group of Church of God folk. This grew out of a visit I had with Max Gaulke, president of Gulf Coast Bible College, which resulted in our decision to have an invitational unity meeting between some of our people. He invited 12 from the Church of God, while I invited 12 from the Church of Christ, all from the Houston area. We had young and old, black and white, laymen and clergy, students and Ph.D.'s. I was eager for this experience, for I am persuaded that it is this kind of approach that we need more of. There was no advertising and no announcements. It was quietly arranged as one more way to break down barriers and build bridges. No speeches were planned. It was a matter of meeting and sharing together, looking to God's Spirit to lead us however and wherever.

The first night we encouraged each person within the circle to say something about what God has done in his or her life. It was an important way of getting acquainted. The testimonials were substantial, encouraging and edifying, leading us to realize that we have so very much in common. The Church of God folk kept expressing their amazement that such a meeting was occurring, for all their previous experiences with our people had been negative.

The second night we discussed a number of differences between us, and while the exchange was vigorous and frank it was always brotherly and irenic. And some time was spent in a sharing of information, people with different backgrounds probing one another as to what they believed, points of agreement as much as disagreement. We prayed together and rejoiced that God had brought us together. It was observed that *this* is the unity of the Spirit and that our task is to restore such mutuality throughout our ranks. We were, after all, baptized believers together, which made us brothers, and that for two nights at least we had treated each other as brothers. No one seemed to have any notion that all our differences would have to be settled before we could accept each other as brothers.

I observed an interesting distinction between the two groups that went far deeper than any "denominational" differences. They were people well within the mainstream of their own branch of the Church

of God, the Anderson, Indiana group, for they were ministers, professors, administrators, and students associated with their Bible college. Ours was “the dirty dozen” in that for the most part we are not exactly kosher among our own people. Two of our number came from the non-class group. One was a black minister. Four or five were young ministers who, even though in a sense “in”, are among our revolting young princes. One was a *bona fide* elder from a respected Houston congregation, but one who is a country mile ahead in his thinking and daring. One was a business man and another an educator, both of whom represent the freer church within the Church of Christ. If follows, of course, that such ones are the only ones who would attend such a meeting with any degree of openness.

This made for an interesting study. I discerned more of an inclination on their part to defend prevalent beliefs and practices in the Church of God than on the part of our people to defend our known positions. We could well be tagged Church of Christ “liberals,” whereas they did not seem to have any comparable group in the Church of God. They were at times a little on the defensive when their *status quo* was questioned, whereas our people were as quick to criticize some of our practices as they were. It was something like an anti-institutional group of one church in conference with the institutional group of another church.

In spite of all this they were as open as any of us in their fraternization, for they had no problem in recognizing Christians in other churches and enjoying fellowship with them. This means that even at the starting point the Church of God folk have not been as sectarian as ourselves, and they therefore haven’t as great a need for a revolt. We all agreed that it was a delightful and enlightening experience. —*the Editor*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I enjoy so much *Restoration Review* and suppose I read every word of all of them. I do feel so strongly that both you and Carl have so much to offer when I would like to apply it in a more pronounced framework. Would to God we might harness all right into one package but suppose that is an impossibility. I do not know what number in hell Ira Rice assigned you and Carl and 90% of other brethren, but mine is 2,500,001 and I do not want you boys grabbing it! —*Jimmie Lovell, Box 146, Palos Verdes Estates, Ca. 90274.*

(I hardly see how Carl and I could be more *pronounced.* "Framework" is something else. Neither of us takes too well to being either framed up or fenced in.I am all for the "one package" idea if this means sharing together in the Body of Christ, being *individually* members thereof. Blending voices in behalf of a party is something else, and that's where harnesses usually come in. One of the surprises we'll have in heaven, I would think, is that there will be people there that we will not expect to see. Assign a man a number in hell and he turns up in heaven! Well, we editors will one day be at home with the Lord, and we will have matured to the point that all these things in this world will be like childhood. I'm all in favor of loving old Ira right into heaven! —*Ed.*)

The name of the church struck a responsive chord in me too. Recently I did a little word study on the term "disciple" for a men's retreat. Both Moulton and Milligan as well as Arndt and Gingrich suggest that *apprentice* conveys the idea of *mathetes* as well or better than most other words. Wouldn't it be delightful if we were all apprentices of Jesus? No wonder Luke uses the term almost to the exclusion of other designations. —*Bob Williams, 210 Wettermark, Nacogdoches, Tx. 75961.*

In reference to your "Does the Holy Spirit Come Along Afterwards," I appreciated your remarks, especially your willingness to show "exceptions" to your thesis. However, I believe you did leave out one problem passage, which is used by almost everyone in encouraging believers to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is a notable example of believers having a second blessing following conversion, whether you hold the view of only the Twelve or the 120 believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit. —*Tom Stewart, 1601 W. South Ave., Emporia, Ks. 66801.*

(The Spirit came to the Twelve on Pentecost as a special endowment and for a special purpose. The church had not yet had its birthday and the Spirit had not yet been given, whether there were "conversions" or not (John 7:39). The apostles were now endowed to carry out their mission, beginning with the ability to speak foreign languages right there on Pentecost. All this is irrelevant to the normal mission of the Spirit in the life of every believer. This normal mission is dearly set forth in Acts 2:38, for even on Pentecost the believers were to repent and be baptized, and upon their response to the gospel they received the Holy Spirit as God's promise. Why should people want it any other way? — *Ed.*)

We continue to find your journal to be full of good news of growth in our Churches of Christ. More than that we appreciate more and more the value of restoration as a continuing process among all of God's churches. And most of all we are excited about the increasing numbers of God's children who accept each other without the traditional tests. *—Tom and Rickey Stoneham, 3421 Wingate, Waco, Tx. 76706.*

I think the tide is turning *west* of the Mississippi, and if we can get it turned over on this side, maybe the church can get about the business of restoration and realize that it has not yet done so. I will be 30 years old in June, and I hope I live long enough to see the Church of Christ stop straining at gnats and swallowing camels. *—Frank Dennis, 105 Colonial Dr., Cleveland, Ms. 38732.*

There is a difference in a man's inner spiritual balance and what he finds himself teaching. Since receiving the Holy Spirit with the gift of speaking in tongues I find my prayer life enlarged, fasting a privilege, witnessing empowered, healing a reality, worship a pleasure, love overflowing, agreement with all God's word, assurance increased and on and on and on. Yes, and much garbage tossed out of the crevices. There is no need which God does not have the power to fill if we just ask. *—Tom Trunich, Box 552, Buda, Tx. 78610.*

If you would like a sample copy of *Fellowship*, published by Independents, Disciples, and Church of Christ (18 concerned disciples), Leroy Garrett being one of the editors, send your request either to us in Denton or to 1699 Court St., NE, Salem, OR. 97301. You can subscribe for 2.00 at same addresses.

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